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Soil control legislation discussed in committee

LANSING – Township officials from St. Clair County testified Tuesday before the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee in support of legislation to allow property owners living along or near the water to do routine yard work without applying for a soil erosion permit, Sen. Jud Gilbert announced.

Clay Township Clerk Mike Pellerito and local building inspectors Bill Klaassen and Mike Kras spoke in favor of Senate Bill 282, sponsored by Gilbert.

SB 282 would exempt residential activities like gardening, landscaping and fencing from the permit requirements of Michigan's soil and sedimentation control program.

"It's great to see support for this common sense legislation," said Gilbert, R-Algonac. "While controlling erosion is important, it is also important to give homeowners freedom on their private property. Planting some flowers or putting in a new mailbox will not damage Michigan's waterways, so requiring a permit to do so is ridiculous."

The bill also would allow property owners to receive a general permit for their designated local soil and sedimentation control agency for seawall maintenance and repairs. The cost of this permit would be prohibited from exceeding the agency's administrative costs.

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